

Fearless 54

SAVING THE EARTH

I own each headline.
The newspaper is mine.
I make my money
delivering it each week.

I reside in lot
C-9 under large trucks,
where I can slide my
newspapers under them.

They make good, cheap beds.
They soak up the oil spills.
They make fine blankets
and they're disposable.

I'm doing my part,
recycling, saving the
earth from ruin each
passing day of my life.

I'm working on a
cure for mental illness.
Penicillin and
cough syrup, this is it.

Luis Cuauhtemoc Berriozabal

proving the experts wrong

the more i help or do
"good" things for people
the more they expect that
kind of shit out of me every day

yet, the ones i have
pissed off or disappointed
over the years

they expect nothing out of me

i don't think any of them
come around anymore

and can you believe they tried
to tell me when i was younger
that being an asshole would
never pay off for me

- JJ CAMPBELL

ADOLESCENCE

Look at me
from the wilderness
of adolescent funk
put your expression
versifying mind
between paper and the wind
and slip through
bodily form
you will forget
some alien sorrows
and scenting fates
endlessly wounding your horizon.

an untitled poem

an untitled poem
that begins
he wakes up on fire

i write it
on a monday night
seventeen years after
the fact

the sky a resigned bruise
over a city i'll
never love

april deep inside
a codeine sleep

and hopefully
it's a quick death

i avoid the word *mercy*
for obvious reasons

and the pictures
are all faded

the ashes cold and
plowed under
and built on again

and flowers don't grow
in this state
in the season of
butchered dreams

deer starve
and dogs go insane
and if i had kind words
i'd offer them

B.Z. Niditch if you took them
i'd smile

don't ever think
this is enough

Change

He returns home
from his private
adventure
to discover
no one is the
person he left.

PATRICIA G. ROURKE

THE FUCKER

Appearing at a location near you comes this saga of
an everyday man, who tries to escape the wrath of those whom
seek to destroy peace and tranquility amongst fellow observers.
You'll notice at first some head pressure which
will radiate to other parts of the body. To me, it is evident that
no matter where you go, there IS indeed always a fucker.
The person who waits on the green at the traffic light,
the woman who orders 3 of the super-combo meals at
whatever grease-pit you happen to call dinner at night.
The fucker who takes the last parking space in the lot,
and then turns and smiles at you as you drive off. The guy
in the theater who munches hard candy or slurps on the sour patch kids
as they burn his tongue to hell- then continues many trips to
the vending stand where he buys soda after soda to numb
the fucker. Solution: the only way to triumph over the fucker;
beat him to it.

Joseph Veronneau

the squeak of angels

angel face angel eyes eyes
angel baby with crystalline thighs
talking to death talking of death
talk of minimal intentions
muted trumpet on street of dreams
you inordinately unordinary
schemer
please oh please squeeze my cock
in your merciless grip
the taste of liquidly-lush revolution
slip-sliding the widening chasm
of your cocktease chaos
your anarchist's penchant
for goose-stepping off the edge
arms outstretched like butterfly
swimmer
the dinner regurgitating itself
splurging on jackrabbit hammerlove
a voice like the squeak of angels
sister of glum gloom glimmering
shimmering on bare mattress
ending what barely began
with dimly-lit dimwit bullet toss
the toilet flushing damp-hearted
evidence
down the flagrant river
of vivacious vagrancy

Joseph Verrilli

Drive

A few friends and I went to a bar last night to have some drinks, talk about everything,
and think about nothing.

Then he came around again and I used him as a blanket to hide from it all.

The world was shrinking again.

I can just barely keep my nose above the water in this pool if I stand on my
Tippey-Toes...but there is no salt.
And who can survive a sunburned Sunday without a Margarita?

Lately I look in the mirror and see someone who is miles and miles away from anyone that
I would ever want to know.
So sometimes when I can't breathe at night I get on the Interstate and drive North, with
the lights winking and chasing after me.

Then I turn around, and pretend I'm driving home.

SOUVENIR

Found beneath the bed
After we parted -
A pair of her tights

- DJ WESTON

SOAP

He thinks she's having an affair,
He's sure she's got some other bloke
Because he found her girlfriend's hair
Embedded in the bathroom soap.

- DJ WESTON

a controlled fury

this is no ordinary universe
it slices it dices
forfeits your headless norseman's
penchant for godless mirthship
for every mother's worst
nightmarishly garish color scheme
ream the flamboyant buoyancy
love and hate and ritualistic emptiness
and ever-bouncing words
and fly-by-night revolutions
of the mind's promise/premise
to occupy the next invisible country
the next shadow-boxed transparency
the smear ing of the sphereless
the fearless the leering caterwauling
the imminent death throes
tossing monkey wrenches in mid-air
snatching curves in cubist mitts
away from pisshappy pitchers' mounds
flitting through this no-ordinary-
universe
the gritting of guitar strings
a collection of gratuitous swinging
thingies
a disappearing mural a controlled fury

Joseph Verrilli

Diagnosis

With the skill
of a surgeon
and with just
about the same
amount of cool
detachment,
you opened
my heart,
removed
your love
and in your
post-surgical
report
you wrote:
it was all
a big fat lie.

PATRICIA G. ROURKE

city bus passenger staring out window

I'm not an eagle
soaring across the sky
I'm more like a statue
frozen in timeless inertia
like lot's wife
turned into a pillar
of salt
staring out the window
on a city bus
not seeing anything
in particular
just gazing off
into space

the more good things happen
the sadder
I become
sad sadder saddest
they wait for me to perform
all those faces
who need something
to fill their bleak days with
bleak bleaker bleakest
but I'm just empty inside
too aware of the futility
of it all
too zoned in
on the final act
that will take everybody's
breath away
but not out of excitement
or passion
but out of something
best described
as grotesque

Joseph Verrilli

CREATIVITY

Night shadows
keep you awake
like embers in oneness
ideas like ashes
on brown branches
float before your eyes
in the warm air
near the firefly dawn,
lost in silence
the sun observes a day
in the motionless dawn
the light too is fleeting
in an abandoned world
giving solitude its morning
and a far-ranging butterfly
in a rare orange repose
casts its dazzling echo
in a page of language.

B. Z. Niditch

The sixties revisited

It was like
deja vu all
over again-
all he needed
was his grand
pappies-Love
It or Leave It-
American Legion
paraphernalia
to complete
the picture
of young red
neck-future
alcoholic of
America pro-
file- I decided to
cut the chase
by saying,
"Sure nuke
the towel heads
Then tell me
exactly what
you're going
to do with
all those radio-
active oil fields
& useless real
estate no one
can ever use
for like ten
thousand years"
I waited patiently
for his answer-
I'm still waiting

ALAN CATLIN

the red sea

raindrops dangle from my tongue
forming silent prayers
like that first pull of mad dog

and i wonder whether mores
knew how to swim
when he parted the red sea

which is what i think about when you smile
knowing i can't pay the rent
much less turn water into wine

so i make some cup o' noodles
and marvel at anyone who can follow anything for 40 yrs
the way you follow your heart.

ocean's lullaby
In Memory of Albert Huffstickler

it's 4 am
when waves roll in
i haven't seen them
or you
for years

you fold your arms
into the shape of a shell
and wait for a truck
headed for
the coast

so it's 4 am
and you brace your guitar
for the moment
when you remembered
the tune

now it's getting late
and you whisper that
there are only
so many ways
to play amazing grace

so i have to say
let the waves roll out
there are only so many ways
to hear them pounce
or build a cradle
for the stars
to croon
swoon
and
moan
lamenting the ocean's sweet sleep
with a cat's tongue held tight

so the tune won't carry
and the only voice felt ringing
from the western wind
is an echo.

John Dorsey

John Dorsey

A Pictorial Tribute After Rodin

William At Work

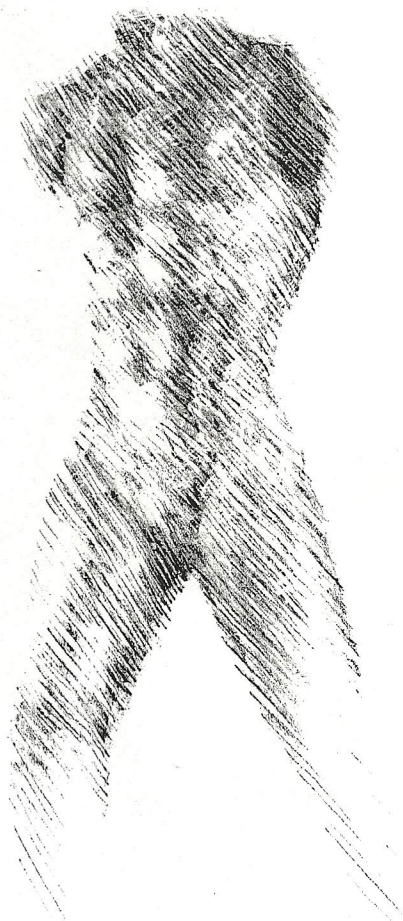
near perfect january evening.
trucking through slush,
i wend my way to your place.
my face relieved to feel the air
above freezing for the first time
in weeks.

you are drawing again.
your somewhat shaggy hair
down in your eyes.
music is pumping fluidly.
so much space in this eternal,
collapsing moment...
i must yawn.

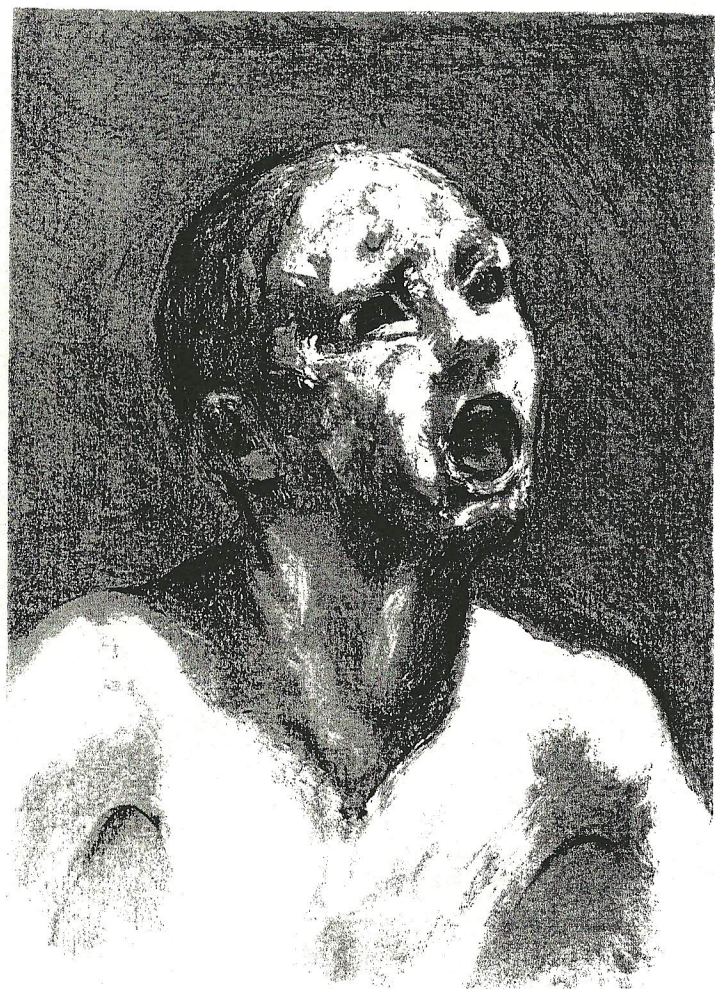
good to be here.
silent on the sofa.
orange-ish light from the antique
lamp warm like gold.
"i want to draw like Rodin sculpts."
o' endless copper waves!
o' endless winter dying.

your aristocratic gaze and frail
fingers working the blank page.

kevin m. hibshman.



The Walking Man (After Rodin) - Wm.



The Cry (After Rodin) - Wm.

lullaby for kyle

you are never alone here.
dizzy w/ the spinning of
our glowing sphere.
here is a grouping of words.
here is a disk of light.
tucked safely under your
pillow - it will nourish you
through each night.

i will be with you -
scaling the dream-wall.
in our sleep, so shall we meet.
in our confections bittersweet,
you see the milk and honey of ALL.

you are young.
turn your mind on and it will revolve
around countless suns.
here comes the poet locking arms
with the magician.
vision is their loving gift.
unwrap that one slowly for it is
wisdom birthing a future.

wild and strange - the colors and
shapes that will plague you.
take in all you can take.
make the unseen sing you to
sleep in its deep, ragged glory.
love and blessings abide.
goodnight, star-child.
sleep tight.

kevin m. hibshman.

Untitled

golden birds still fly.
hover here over our dreams
for the lost children.

kevin m. hibshman.



The Shade (After Rodin) - Wm.

On the highways

these interstates
of blown tires-
rubber treads are
stretched out
alongside double
wide skidmarks-
deserted cars-
looted-derelect
shadow mounds
in low lying
100% humidity-
early morning
ground fogs-
burnt relics
rusted-immovable
mile markers-
desiccated memorial
wreathes decay
nearby

ALAN CATLIN

playing with fire

we're sitting in a diner
when tim tells me to never sell out

meet an older woman
move to europe
you knew ginsberg

he's afraid i'll find a job
a house
a pattern set behind some long picket fence
which all sounds pretty good

he wasn't there when i rolled quarters for condoms
in some little room in south philly
so as not to hear the pitter patter of tiny feet

he wasn't there when nobody told me i was beautiful
and that room closed in
old and silly like the bloom of some acient tulip

and i'd like to tell him that nobody knows anyone anymore
except ghosts ringing bells on posts
who know my voice
and hear it still

but i can't because there's another girl
who's neck i'd like to kiss
younger than the last
who doesn't live in the spirit world.

John Dorsey



Victor Hugo(After Rodin) - Wm.

CRANE'S BEACH

You put on your 6AM lotion
your round eyes
surfing the cove
on the beach
forgetting your sneakers
in the white sand dunes
wishing for boundless breakers
Poseidon's face
and in the seascape
denim shirt removed
and back twisting
with the rough drafts
of verse in my head
knowing forbidden words
will engage
the incoming tide.

B. Z. Niditch

Chainsmoking in my Cape

If some dickhead starts complaining about your smoking, telling you it's going to kill you and blah blah blah...this is what you say to them: "We're all going to die anyway. So, I'm just taking a pro-active role in my own death. Because more than likely, I'll just end getting hit by a train anyway."

People are so afraid to die.

Hell, I've attempted suicide so many times, they ought to just have me put to sleep like an old useless dog. Really, the only thing that was scary thing about it all was eating hospital food for a week, and being fed tranquilizers like Pez.

Then there's this whole neurotic thing about 'Where do you go when you die?'"

All of our lives we are fed propaganda about people with wings flying around, and scary flames and shit.

Would it make any difference if you knew?

I say 'Where do you go when you live?'

Sometimes I wear a cape and pretend I have super powers.

Once you've accepted the inevitable, you seem to enjoy these little distractions more.

Then there are days when I try to tie the cape around my neck as tight as possible.

Just to get it the fuck over with already..

If you say the word 'train' like a hundred times...it doesn't sound like a word at all anymore.

I like to wear my cape, and sit on the porch and chain-smoke. And ,of course, people stop to stare at me. "Hey moron! You just wasted 8 minutes of your life staring at some stranger in a cape!"

I yell from my porch and shake my head.

Sometimes I shake it too hard and it hurts.

Tomorrow I'm going to put on a scuba diving suit and pretend I'm invisible.

The suit is difficult to put on, but the whole ordeal won't be much of a stretch...

Our time here is so short I'm told.

But there are times when the days drag on and on...and each day just seems like the last.

I've been glancing at my watch all day today.

And I've decided that I really don't smoke enough.

Debbie Kirk

History teaches that evil at its most exalted is merely a wretched excess of good. Good becomes righteous; righteousness becomes evil. Are we in the dawn of a Great Awakening, or in the last moment of twilight, just before the plunge into an abyss of ignorance and terror? I don't know the answer to that question. There are those who will prefer another Dark Ages to the Triumph of the New People, the blinding purity of Enlightenment.....

for an editor who insists that every poem should have a point

but i mean
FUCK

the children are found
IN CAGES

and one is dead
and the other two dying
and the president says there
are bigger problems

says war is inevitable
and that god supports him
and i'm still thinking
HOLY FUCKING CHRIST
these are humans left to rot
IN THEIR OWN FILTH

this is america
in the 21st century

THE FUCKING
AGE OF
ADVANCEMENT

so how many witches
have to be burned before
any of us are made
clean?

- JOHN SWEET

THE HOTEL LIFE

He lives the hotel life,
one room amidst
others rooms
with good people,
and some rotten apples,
selling dream-killing
powder, rock, advertised
as magic dust.

He lives the hotel life,
but is slowly
growing tired
and he feels life
is just not worth living,
he plans his demise,
but he's also crying
out loud for help.

He lives the hotel life,
but he craves for
structure and
assistance, 'cause
the hotel life is no
longer cutting it:
he'd rather cut a
wrist, but he won't.

Luis Cuahtemoc Berriozabal

idle thoughts on a sunday night

listening to billie holiday

watching this woman
get fucked over by the
pool on tv

occasionally drinking from
this bottle of beer

wondering if the money shot
will come before i
finish this poem

guess not

- JJ CAMPBELL

She screams at her child
to get up off the floor.
I cringe. The child laughs.

Kelley Jean White MD



impact

i can see this car
up ahead of me

it's weaving back and forth
consistently crossing over
the yellow centerline

and as i get closer
i know i have to
make a decision

do i swerve to avoid
or do i brace myself
for impact

and in that split second
i realize the choice is easy

i brace myself

for the unknown should
not be feared

it should be welcomed
with open arms

and apparently
a bleeding heart

- JJ CAMPBELL

poem, descending

this man with a rope

with his girlfriend
dead at his feet in an
ordinary apartment and
the idea of art not as beautiful
but as necessary

of faith not as a weapon
but an addiction

and did you really think
the age of famine was over?

did you believe that
the flesh of christ would
actually feed the starving?

or this

the camera running
while the woman is raped

while the soldier
kicks a young boy to death

the fact that lies are
a greater form of violence than
the truth

and think of anyone you've
ever voted for

of the blood on their hands
and on your own

the world of objects
filled with
nothing but failure

john sweet

Rejection

Lately
there is very
little return
on our life
investment,
but I am
not ready
to admit defeat
by selling
love purchased
stock.

PATRICIA G. ROÛRKE

A pig's tale

Renunciation and simplicity of life;
as soon as the asafetida expands and sizzles,
a degree of serenity and quietude rarely seen.

Life in a small New England town;
the pointing-out instruction on the nature of mind:
all the sauce must adhere to the peas.

Adventures of a ditsy, downtown New York Bohemian;
three words which strike the vital points:
wash lentils thoroughly.

The newspaper route from hell;
you can't make a cauldron of yourself:
remove seeds, a sad but clear resignation.

A killer clown stalks call girls;
after being adjusted you may feel crooked;
some kind of relish should be served.

Kelley Jean White MD

portrait of flannery o'connor, august 2, 1964

a hand holding a crucifix
or a hand holding a hammer

a length of rope maybe
and the body it's tied to

a man begging or crying
or bleeding

a woman who makes no sound

who waits to be discovered

and it gets to this point
where
the nails need to be driven

where the innocent need
to be raped by the holy

and what i hope is to
never be mistaken as either

and any god you pray to
is the god
of murdered children

remember this
when you're on your knees
john sweet

LET GO

During that orgasmic surge
While writhing in her lover's lap
She felt an overwhelming urge
To let it all go, piss and crap.
- DJ WESTON

SICK BITCH

I crave the thrust of a revolver
Underneath my skirt,
Massaging my hot wet vulva
As I cream and squirt. - DJ WESTON

DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

Abandoned cities fester,
Deliquescent under soft tropical rain,
While in the countryside the people toil
Where flags and banners deck flat sodden fields
And rousing music brays through megaphones
And men in black stand guard
Barking insane commands. - DJ WESTON

SEPARATION

you wanted
no self-reproach
to be singleminded
with nameless wishes
finding yourself sunglassed
in a less than congenial home
listening to a frozen dawn
improvisational jazz
children's voices
having rode abandoned
your painful drawings
and maroon bicycle
with a deep silence
of an insomniac world
every invisible night.

B. Z. Niditch

A Matter of Perspective

You see yourself
as quietly turning
off the light,
gently closing the door.

Others hear a forced
slam; feel the darkness
of your undiscussed
silence.

PATRICIA G. ROURKE





Mephistopheles ~ Wm. 1-28-03